imports ; in 1915 it was 11.4 per cent, and in 1916, 10.5 per cent.

The serious shipping situation with which the new War Cabinet was confronted at the beginning of 1917 called, as is told in another section, for further drastic reductions of imports.

Import Restriction.

So/^ Lor<? Gurzon's Committee, set up by the Cabinet on 2ist December, 1916, to examine this question, recommended that out of a total restriction of 500,000 tons a month, 200,000 tons should be at the expense of timber imports. The War Cabinet examined the Committee's Report on 16th February, 1917, and in order to ensure that such a reduction should be carried out without leading to such a timber shortage as would hamper our military efforts, we decided to appoint a Director of Timber Supplies at the War Office, with an Inter-Departmental Committee to assist him. The first holder of this post was Sir J. Bampfylde Fuller. On igth February, we decided at a War Cabinet meeting that timber imports must be cut down by a further 100,000 tons a month—making a total reduction of 300,000 tons a month. The question was further considered by us on 2ist February. A memorandum submitted by the Committee on Restriction of Imports pointed out that the reduction of timber imports by the amount of 200,000 tons a month originally proposed would leave the timber

imports in 1917 at a rate of 364,000 tons a month ; a further reduction of 100,000 tons would thus mean cutting off well over half our 1916 timber imports.

There was timber enough in France and the United Kingdom to replace this amount, but possibilities of greater home production were limited by labour shortage, scarcity of sawing plant, and difficulties of